

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

5 The present invention concerns oligonucleotides containing one or more modified nucleotides which increase the binding affinity of the oligonucleotides to target nucleic acids having a complementary nucleotide base sequence. These modified oligonucleotides hybridize to the target sequence at a faster rate than unmodified oligonucleotides having an identical nucleotide base sequence. Such modified oligonucleotides include oligonucleotides containing at least one 2'-O-methylribofuranosyl moiety joined to a nitrogenous base. Oligonucleotides can be modified in accordance with the present invention to preferentially  
10 bind RNA targets. The present invention also concerns methods of using these modified oligonucleotides and kits containing the same.